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1996

HOLOCAUST POEMS

by

Rose Weiss Herstik

Rose Weiss Herstik

PII Redacted

It should be understood,
Whatever mistakes of English language
Are in this poems
They are written from heart and soul
Through experiences of a Holocaust survivor,
Who never was educated in English language.

Rose Weiss Herstik

Rose Weiss Herstik

Rose Weiss Hersch

When I die
Nothing in this world will happen or change
Only few hearts will tremble
Like flowers in the morning dew.

Translation from poem by Czech
Poet, Jiri Volker

To my sons and to my family, with all my love,
Mother

March 1982

MY POEMS

To my sons RONIE and MIKE,

Rage Weisse Hellhole

NEVER AGAIN!

MY PRAYER

Dear God,

Despite the horrors I lived through,
I had strength to pull my soul and heart
From the darkness to light.

I became wiser,
Even if I make mistakes sometimes.
I lived through disappointments, love and anger
I learned to be understanding and more tolerant
To my fellow man.

You, God, let me see the ugliness and
The beauty of this world,
You took from me once the biggest
Gift of man... Freedom, but gave me back so much more,
Liberated me, and gave me love of my family.
You let me deal with all my pain
And let me come out a better human being,
And taught me to like myself.

Rose Weiss Herstik
January 18, 1982

Rose Weiss Herstik

COMING TRAGEDIES

Why are you crying little girl?
The summer is bright and the sun is shining
The smell of the lilacs is in the air
And the butterfly is free

You are sitting on the attic steps
And your eyes are full of liquid pearls
Your heart is heavy like a piece of marble

You are in the spring of your life little girl
Why is there winter in your heart?
How do you know what is coming for you little girl?
The mystery is called life.

Rose Weiss Herstik
March 19, 1983

Rose Herstik

AUSCHWITZ 1942

Yesterday, the world was full of hope for me
I heard the birds singing,
I could smell the flowers in the air
And the sunshine touched my face

Today.

The winding road is built slowly
The air is filled with screams and tears
The aching backs and tortured bodies
Wearing rags in the ice cold winds
The empty stomachs crying loudly
Hearts jump in fright from biting dogs

The dogs jump at you and tear your flesh
With last strength, you pick up the stones
To build a bloody winding road

New people are coming
You hear the children cry

How would you dare to straighten up your
Lowered and painful head

The crematorium is so close by

Rose Weiss Herstik
Rose Weiss Herstik
In 1942 I went to the concentration camps.
Auschwitz-Birkenau-Rawensbrück-Malchow

in 1942 Auschwitz-Birkenau
 Death March Rawensbrück-Malchow
 Liberated May 9 end of war 1945

Rose Weiss Herstik

LOOKING BACK

LEAVING HOME

The afternoon wore a gray flannel cape.
The boots stopped at the door.
The shrill noise of the doorbell
Touched the heart with iron tongs.

My grandmother's cold hand warily opened
The door.
The huge swastika was surrounded with
Bloody red.
I put on my coat, embraced my loved ones
And looked back.
My photographic mind pushed a lever
To keep a picture forever in my soul
And heart.
And the world disappeared like we never
Had been there.

THE TRAIN

The train was filled with sad eyes.
The hands were holding on to window rims,
Like little dead birds with broken wings.
Hope flew away through the window
Like a mist which disappeared into the skies.
White faces were dominated by eyes
Filled with liquid diamonds.
My father's outstretched arms
Are holding me, even now, in my dreams.
Evening tightened its cape
And suddenly it was black.
The train whistle blew.

Rose Weiss Henstik

THE LAND OF HORRORS

The train whistle blew,
The wheels started rolling.
Horror cut deeper into our frightened hearts.
The windows were adorned with heavy bars
Instead of curtains of lace.
We are huddled together, rolled into one fright,
A hand of iron and ice gripped in our minds.
An unknown place of unexpected horrors
Pulled our train like a magnet
To the lights of electrified bars.
They shone like the Jewish star of our destiny.

DESTINATION: CONCENTRATION CAMP

The train stopped its rolling feet.
The air filled with the mist of our crying eyes.
We marched to the gates,
Welcomed by stomping heavy boots and bayonets
And barking dogs and curses.
The gates opened, the bayonets started to dance
On unsuspecting heads.
Screams of pain filled the night air.
Souls were flying to heaven,
Their white wings stretching to freedom.

Cannons from the guard towers around the camp
Were shooting belts of fire.
Nude white bodies standing in a line of melting snow
Were building a pale pearl chain.
A big door opened to let the bodies in.
Like a monster, it swallowed the long lines.
Another door spit the bodies out,
With broken spirit and dead eyes.

Rose Waus Herolt

THE START OF THE END

A cruel siren screams into tired ears.
Muddy bodies with enslaved hearts
Rise from their beds of torture
Where the rats and body lice have their feast.
The bodies rise to the always cursing presence
Of guards in gray, armed with sticks and
Shrill insults, and to barking, biting dogs.
Running blood mixes with mud and rain.

"CELL APPELL! CELL APPELL!"

It is the order to form ranks and stand at attention.
It is the motto any time of the hated days and nights.
It is to stand in line for hours
With wet clothes frozen to our skin, in total silence.
But they cannot stop the rumbling from our bellies.
The crumbs of bread filled with worms,
And the muddy soup
Never fill the stomach and quiet it,
But only let it protest in crying noises.

Pyramids of bodies are stacked high, ready to fill
The burning, always hungry mouths of the crematorium.
Our tired bones, with hollow eyes and shaven heads
Welcome the presence of death.

Time stands still, it is always night.
The torture and the death and the pain
Are ever present.
It is not remembered how it is
To feel human.
We are like the lowest of animals.
We are in a stupor always.

Has God forgotten His children?
Or is He trying their iron will and belief?

Suddenly, from a forgotten time,
Night opens its eyes to the shining sun,
And a magic key cuts through our chains.
Freedom!
Sweet Freedom!

THE HOLOCAUST

FEAR

I remember the dark days
When the people on the streets
Looked at me with hate.

The yellow star adorned my coat
I was the outcast for no reason at all.

I had to run and hide
The Jewish star followed me
To the end.

The black boots and swastikas
Followed me where the dark days started
With no end in sight.

Torture and death followed
Day by day
With no hope and
Almost no end.

The nightmare had a name
It was connected with human cruelty and shame
Auschwitz.

Rose Weiss Herstik
April 1996

Rose Weiss Herstik

THEY WHO DON'T BELIEVE

They who close their hearts,
And petty minds
They who live in limited and closed worlds
They who have their souls closed in iron breasts
They who are prejudiced and want to be blind
They don't want to be touched by truth
They feel guilty and are afraid of their own dreams
They don't want to see the truth
That Holocaust has happened

I hope they never will be touched by bloody hands
Their children never have to scream in their
Sweaty dreams
Because then they would realize
That Holocaust should never have happened.

Rose Weiss Herstik
January 27, 1979

Rose Weiss Herstik

I SEE MYSELF

When I look inside myself
I see my naked soul
I was terrorized too often
My trembling heart often reached my throat

It never gives me comfort
That I was not alone
The long forgotten hours
Haunt me in my sleep
And I feel I am forever
In a jail of my own.

Rose Weiss Herstik
June 3, 1983

Rose Weiss Herstik

THE TORTURE OF MY SOUL

The pictures of past time
Are imbedded in my mind and heart
My bruised heart and soul
Are wounded forever
The words forever mean a lifetime.
People surround you
But you are always alone with your pain.
Your face has to show courage
And strength.
Will it ever get better?
Time passes
Toward the end of my time.
I have to be
For once, for myself.

Rose Weiss Herstik

May 5, 1993

Rose Weiss Herstik

THE YEAR 1945

The gloomy fires stopped burning
The hell closed its doors
That was the end of war
The star of hope was born
The doomed came out of hell
New hope embraced their hearts
The lives which almost perished
Suddenly came alive
The air was full of sunshine
The birds started to sing
The voices of the children
Had a silvery ring
Freedom, Sweet Freedom
The most precious of all life

Rose Weiss Herstik
Rose Weiss Herstik

THOUGHTS OF A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

Sometimes I feel
I have to remember the lost and half forgotten times
I desperately would like to recapture my youth
And past happiness
But my vision is clouded by pain and horror
I can see myself
Looking like a skeleton, wearing rags
And living in a bottomless pit
Stripped of all human dignity
The pictures flashing in my brain
Causing me sleepless nights
And I try to chase them away in vain
Then I open the windows and doors of my mind and heart
To let in love and understanding
The love builds around my bruised soul
A protective wall
The present world reminds me often of the past
That violence and pain is still here with us
And never ends
Then I feel sad, and sitting passive in my chair
Not knowing how to change the present world
And my tortured soul is screaming
Please God, never again.

Rose Weiss Herstik

Rose Weiss Herstik
December 7, 1981

THE CHILDREN OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

To my beloved sons Ronie and Michael Herstik.

We tried so hard to shield them from our pain and denied them the knowledge of our past. But their ears were listening to our whispering and our broken words. Their eyes saw the streaming tears, we couldn't always hide. They did feel the tragedy in the air. We gave them love and financial things to soften our guilt we felt. They were smart and knew the guilt should not be ours. They grew us to be strong and they have a commitment to give their children a better world. They know, Holocaust never again!

Rose Weiss Herstik

Rose Weiss Herstik

THE SURVIVORS

Some of us came back from death and destruction
With broken hearts and nightmares
But our unbroken spirit was able to triumph
Over hate
We brought the message of truth
To the world about Holocaust
With the strength of our spirit
We started from scratch
We filled our lives with love not hate
Your message to your children
Be aware of precious freedom and liberty.

Rose Weiss Herstik
Rose Weiss Herstik
April 10, 1989

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

A desire was burning in my soul
To reach the world with words
My tongue was too heavy and tied
The miracle called pencil
Was put into my hand
The wide leaf of paper
Opened to me a new world
My soul is healing
It helps to spread the word
The medicine is selfish
It helps only my soul.

Rose Weiss Herstik

Rose Weiss Herstik

contemporary poems

To my Michael, Mom.

A lazy summer afternoon
Sitting on the sofa
I pressed a small chubby body to my heart
My son, Michael's big eyes
Looking at my mouth
I was telling him a story
My heart was melting with love
I wanted to hold on to his little hand
To be pressed forever to my heart.
Nothing if forever
It is just a word
Eerie, like memories
They always stay in our hearts.

Rose Weiss Hersik

Rose Weiss Hersik

My beloved son Ronie

Time is rushing us.
But memories stay with us.

I still remember when I was a young woman
Twenty-eight years old,
Holding a precious bundle in my arms.
That precious little bundle
Became a wonderful, responsible
Human being, a father himself.
Life has a way to heal
Even the worst pain.
But never let you forget.
With time,
Even the worst memories soften.
I wish for you
That from now on
You should build up
Until long old age
The most wonderful memories
With your beautiful family.

Happy Birthday
With all my love, your Mom.

Rose Weiss Herstik

Rose Weiss Herstik
October 13/94

HAPPY TIMES

To my son Ronie for his 30th birthday.

I clasped your little hands
And my heart slipped into them.
The brown eyes and sweet face
Giving me joy forever.

Thirty years ago,
I hold you,
For the first time in my arms
My heart melted like snow in sun
And you were forever a part of me.

I loved the patter of your tiny feet
And the rambling noise
Of your toys around me.
The time progressed
Four little hands
And always torn knees on the jeans
Kept busy my days.
I felt happy to be endangered
From yours, and your brothers
Wooden guns and water pistols.
The time flew like water in the river
And grew into a big stream.
The nights were surrounded with books you studied.

Suddenly you disappeared
Into your world.
Left a void for me
To reemerge to be you.

The respected grown-up you
I started wondering what happened
Where flew the time.
But the sentimental
Nostalgic impressions
Of four little hands
Are bedded in my heart forever,
And my love just grows with passing time.

Happy Birthday my darling,

From Mom.

Rose Weiss Herstik
October 13, 1979

Rose Weiss Herstik

MIRACLES

In the 50 years of my life
The world changed in many ways.

The tide of time
Changed its course.

The years soften the pain
Of bad memories.

But remembering is forever
The age makes you wiser.

Your children suddenly
Are adults

In the winter of your life
A sweet miracle happens,
Joy, forever.

Grandchildren, twins!

Sweet dolls, Alexandra and Gabriela

Rose Weiss Herstik
November 1994
2 o'clock in the morning
Rose Weiss Herstik

WHEN I LOOK INTO THE MIRROR

I see with pain my wrinkled face
The eyes lost their shine of youth
My looks turn inside of me
In my heart and soul

I am proud to say
The years didn't touch my youthful soul
I always try to understand
The youth and the times I live in

My years and wisdom
Carries me through foolishness of youth
And then I see in the mirror
The benefit of time in my wrinkled face.

Rose Weiss Herstik

Rose Weiss Herstik
March 1983

THE DREAM OF A MOTHER

The world of dreams and imaginations spins around.
It is the magic kaleidoscope, between the laundry
and the dirty floors!

The dreams are about sandy beaches, where
nights full of stars have their stop.

The years slipping through, like sand through
a strainer.

The memories are colorful lights, like stars
apart, between the years.

Nothing stops time,
Just one day you see the growing images of yourself
and you think;
Life just starts, and has no end.

Rose Weiss Herstik
1972

Rose Weiss Herstik

YOU ARE WITH ME

In deep dark of the night
My eyes avoiding sleep
My memories remembering you
From long time ago
Dashing and handsome
With a smile on your lips
Exposing your brilliant white teeth
You are holding my hand
Your eyes are full of love
I feel young once more
And want to press my hungry lips to yours
To feel your assuring kisses
I am vulnerable
And so lonely without you
In the deep dark of the night
I feel your presence with me
You standing before my eyes
Assuring me
That you are always with me.

Rose Weiss Herstik
July 28, 1992

*Rose Weiss Herstik
after the death of my
beloved husband*

JUST BEING HUMAN!

The human being is in his soul never just one.
He is the everyday practical, angry, busy and
Loving.

He is the secret poet in his heart
Or sentimental fool

He is his own friend and his own enemy.
He is sweet and tender and an everyday nobody.
Sometimes, he is full of mistakes,
But he is a human being,
Always the important one.

Rose Weiss Herstik
September 27, 1976

Rose Weiss Herstik

It is May
I am looking at the violets
The petals are pure silk
How can it be
So much beauty
In the cruel and violent world.
Sun, and stars
An rainbows
Murder and mayhem
Hunger and poverty
On one world together.

Rose Weiss Herstik
August 25, 1995

Rose Weiss Herstik

FRIDAY EVENING

The house is cold and lonely
The sabat candles are blinking so sad.

Where went the laughter and love?
Suddenly I am sitting alone
My soul and heart are gripped with ice cold hands.
The children are grown,
Have their lives to live.

You my darling mate
Left me to be by myself.
My years carry me closer to my fate
And then one day we meet again.

Rose Weiss Herstik
February 10, 1995

Rose Weiss Herstik

I WISH

If a miracle would happen

And the world would be a perfect place
There won't be no more wars and hate.

All the people would smile at eachother

The world would have a new name
Tolerance, Brotherhood and Love

Rose Weiss Herstik

February 25, 1995

Rose Weiss Herstik

NEW HOPE

The weather is stormy
The leaves falling from the tree
Like years of my life,
The green leaves turn brown.
Suddenly there are just the hollow branches
There will come new season
When the tree will blossom new generation
And new hope.

Rose Weiss Herstik

Rose Weiss Herstik

THE HOPE DISAPPEARED

So many people around me
I am talking and smiling
And why do I feel so alone?

My heart is surrounded
In a chamber of ice in my chest
The ice will never melt again
Without a loving embrace.

Only my dreams I feel
The love that was
And won't return again.

Rose Weiss Herstik
March 7, 1995

Rose Weiss Herstik '95

RESTLESS NIGHTS

Are filling my life
Lonliness can't be healed.

The old age
Does not let me
Look to far in the future.

Even if my heart
Does not want to believe
The big change,
What I see in the mirror
Is proof to me
The clock of life is ticking
Fast away.

Rose Weiss Herstik
April 20, 1994

Rose Weiss Herstik

How can I go on
Saturday nights

Lonely evenings
Torched nights
To remind myself
There is no future anymore
Have to remind myself
There are children
And sweet grandchildren
Thanks and be grateful
But my heart is divided
Love for them is strong
Lonliness is painful
Go on and on until the end.

Rose Weiss Herstik
September 23, 1994

Rose Weiss Herstik

OLD AGE

You've done your best
To stay young at heart
Go with the stream of life
You have your wisdom
Which grew with time.
But don't look much to the future,
There is none.
And the final stage
Is the sadness of it all.
Look back what you have accomplished
Do with the rest
The best you can.

Rose Weiss Herstik

Rose Weiss Herstik

It is May
I am looking at the violets
The petals are pure silk
How can it be
So much beauty
In the cruel and violent world.
Sun, and stars
And rainbows
Murder and mayhem
Hunger and poverty
In one world together

Rose Weiss Herstik
August 25, 1995

Rose Weiss Herstik

LONELINESS

How we hate you and underestimate you!
Yes, you give us misery, heartache and pain
Sometimes, even loss of life,
Because, we cannot bear you anymore.

But, what about our ungratefulness to you?
You can make us ambiguous.
You can cleanse our souls.
You can make us unexpected artist or poets
Which we, without you would never have been.

Rose Weiss Herstik
September 1974

PESACH*

I am remembering,
The small gray-haired woman with the kind
smile on her face.
The queen of the Seder
My beloved grandmother!
The preparing of the Seder,
The excitement of the days!

The little cups for the children, filled with
honey sweet wine!
The grown-ups filled with expectations of the
evening, what a night it was!

The nostalgic moments come back
When the Pesach is coming
Only no one is here anymore!

Rose Weiss Herstik
March 1976

Rose Weiss Herstik

*This is a transliteration to English of
the Hebrew word for Passover.

I IMAGINE

When I would be rich!
And I would do what I wanted to!
I would sit and read the whole day long,
And maybe write too.

I would paint a little and do needlepoint!
I would travel a lot; that's what I would love to do!

To see the world, the poor, the rich,
And help where I could!
To clear the shadow, to let in the sunshine
In the world
That's what I would love to do!

I am not rich; the time is not always mine.
But I have my dreams, and they are mine.
It is more than some rich do!

Rose Weiss Herstik
April 5, 1976

THE GREAT THINGS

I always wanted to do.
I never did.

I dreamed of being a great singer!
The voice strong and sweet;
The room full of enchanted people;
But I never did!

I dreamed of being a great painter;
My paintings full of color and life;
But I never did!

I dreamed of being a politician;
Change the world! It would be just peace;
But I never did!

Then I did become a mother;
My dreams can one day be fulfilled.

Rose Weiss Herstik
January 25, 1972

Rose Weiss Herstik

36TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

36 years of lifetime
Caring and Sharing
Passionate love and passionate fights
The wonder of new born babies in our arms
Worries and sleepless nights

Struggling and building a future
Happiness seeing children's first steps
And achievements
Proud watching them grow
And become the good human beings they are

Suddenly you turn your head
And look behind you
Where are the years rushing behind us
Life's a rolling train

Old age already here
Sickness and worries and the dark nights
You are scared
Look in the mirror
Only the heart in your breast is the same
The face is a stranger
Which you hardly can accept

Holding on to your mate's hand to the end
Was it all worth while?
Just think.

Rose Weiss Herstik

Rose Weiss Herstik

WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE CHANGED?
IN ONE LIFETIME
IT WAS ALL THERE
PAIN, LOVE AND ADVENTURE
CAN YOU ASK FOR MORE?

GLORIOUS LIFE, FILLED WITH ALL

Rose Weiss Herstik

Rose Weiss Herstik

HOPE

After dark night comes always day light

Sometimes the days are rainy
But the sunshine follows the rain

The strengths in us
Is like a armor of a warrior

We are stronger than we ever suspect

The life passes us by
Mixed with rain and rainbow

Grief and hope follow each other

If you fill your life with love and tolerance
With understanding for your fellow man

You find love everywhere.

When you approach late age and wisdom
Life will teach you

Everything you lived through
Mixed good and bad

Was worthwhile for you to live for.

Rose Weiss Herstik
April 1993

Rose Weiss Herstik

YOUTH

The morning dew
Sprinkles the flowers with liquid diamonds
There comes the charmer Sunshine
To steal the diamonds
Drys them out like tears of a child,
And turns the roses in blooming queens
The busy bees are coming with the sweet kisses
To glorify the summer
The air is full of melodys of singing birds
My soul if full of hope
The heavy burdens are in the dark
Corner of the coming winter.

Rose Weiss Herstik

1995

Rose Weiss Herstik

THE SENIOR CITIZEN DANCE

The night is dark
The rain is fine mist of pearls
Behind the doors of the
Social Hall
Bright lights and music
Touches the mood and heart
And soul.
The age loses importance
The body is suddenly light
And turns easy to the melody in dance.
The heart is forever young
And is forgetting
About limited time
In future.

Rose WEiss Herstik

May 27, 1994

Rose Weiss Herstik

ONE OF THOSE DAYS

The day started
The sun is hiding behind the dark skys
Three years when you left me
Never to return.
How come,
The wound in my heart never has healed.
I always try to show a smiling face.
The days are long and the nights
Never end.
Every evening, I say good night to you
Before I am closing the door to the room
Where you died.
I am pretending you are in the house with me,
And the loneliness
Is not so hard to bare.
I know there comes a time
When we will meet again.

Rose Weiss Herstik
June 15, 1995

Rose Weiss Herstik

LATE IN LIFE

Sometimes you have to come
Almost to the end of your life
To understand
It is like to feel
That your standing on the top of
A mountain
And you look down
To see before you eyes your life
You can see the wrong and the right
In your life
And like a ~~shack~~ player
To play the game
And make the right moves
It may be late, it may be in time
When you are lucky
You see clear all
If the gift of right or wrong
Is in your soul
If you made the right moves
Time travels slowly towards the end
Why can you see so late
You could have done more
But it is the end of the game
Your moves were too slow.

Rose Weiss Herstik

Rose Weiss Herstik

September 3, 1995